

“Some Skulls of Estonians”

by Doctor Arthur Chervin

ANTHROPOLOGY SOCIETY OF PARIS

Meeting of February 19, 1880

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Group of 19th Century Estonians

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At our last meeting I had the honor of presenting to you, from the hand of Doctor Ludwig Stieda of Dorpat, four skulls of Estonians; and I have the pleasure of offering to you today, in my own name, this complete skeleton of the same provenance which you now behold. I am so much the happier making this donation to the Society given that our museum, so rich in many respects, only possesses a few skulls and a single skeleton that are solely Estonian.

I shall not enter into a detailed description of this skeleton, and shall instead restrict myself to saying that the measurements obtained on the four skulls submitted by Doctor Stieda as well as on the skeleton are completely in accord with those taken by Doctor Broca in 1868 on four or five skulls that he had at his disposal.

	<div style="text-align: center;"> Skulls (from Doctor Stieda) </div>				<div style="text-align: center;"> Skull of Skeleton (from Doctor Chervin) </div>
	No. 1	No. 2	No. 3	No. 4	
Antero-posterior diameter	174	183	184	181	184
Transverse maximum diameter	138	146	142	142	140
Cephalic index	79.31	79.77	77.17	78.45	77.17
Basibregmatic diameter	128	139	128	136	122
Frontal minimum diam.	96	102	98	100	100
Bizygomatic width . .	124	---	132	135	135

I must point out that Skull No. 1 is a female; the rest are male. The average cephalic index is 78.37 for the five skulls; they are therefore mesocephalic.

The skull belonging to the skeleton presents a slight prognathism that perhaps merits special mention; and I must tell you in passing that this skeleton is one of a man whose place of origin is perfectly known, for he

died in the hospital at Dorpat and was a pure Estonian.

You will observe, messieurs, with this skeleton as with the other Estonian skulls, that the frontal brows are very prominent and that the glabella is partially depressed.

The forehead is receding and low, and if you measure the vertical diameter, you will see that it is only 122. It is therefore quite evident that this skull's cubic capacity must be below average.

The width of the face does not present anything particular to note. However, there is one point which I wish to call to your attention. If, with this skeleton, you examine the anterior opening of the nostrils, you will be able to ascertain that instead of the projecting ridge that one generally encounters, there is a groove which, I believe, is frequently found in the skulls of Negroes and the great apes.

Additionally, it seems to me that the lower branch of the maxilla is wider than what one ordinarily finds, and that the notch that separates the coronoid apophysis and condyle is likewise wider and bigger than usual. I must also point out that these five skulls most revealingly present the supramastoidean projection that Doctor Broca noted on the Estonian skulls that he studied.

Furthermore, I need not remind you that at all times the inferior state of the Estonians has been signalized by researchers; this skeleton constitutes new proof of this opinion's firm foundation.

Lastly, messieurs, I have included with my donation of the skeleton 50 photographs which, I believe, you will find equally interesting from the point of view of the exterior physical aspect and manner of dress of the Estonians.

DISCUSSION

Doctor PAUL TOPINARD. I am not surprised, Doctor Chervin, to see that the Estonians you studied are mesocephalic. For a long time the Finnish have been, I believe, the object of an error; I have considered them to be mainly dolichocephalic instead of brachycephalic, a shape that over the years people have assigned to their skull.